

Background

The Regulations Division provides legal support for all areas of regulation within the Federal Aviation Administration. Each branch within the division provides formal legal interpretations of Federal Aviation Regulations in their respective practice areas. These interpretations are primarily provided to agency personnel, but are also provided to the public. The Division acts as liaison with the Office of the Secretary of Transportation on the legal aspects of the agency's regulatory program and provides legal counsel for the Slot Management System. Attorneys within the division draft and review new or modified regulations, applications for exemption from regulations, legal memoranda, advisory circulars and orders.

Airworthiness, Advanced Aircraft, and Commercial Space Law Branch

This branch addresses legal issues in the areas of airworthiness, advanced aircraft, and commercial space.

Airworthiness issues relate to aircraft manufacture, certification, maintenance and operation. Generally speaking, airworthiness rules establish the design and manufacturing standards aircraft manufacturers must meet. These standards also apply to those who wish to modify aircraft after they have been delivered by the original manufacturer and to repairs made to the aircraft. Aircraft rules apply only to domestic manufacturers and to non-U.S. sources if they are issued a U.S.-type certificate, or are operated by U.S. air carriers.

Advanced aircraft issues relate to remotely operated aircraft and other aircraft reflecting the latest technological concepts. The branch also provides legal counsel regarding the licensing and regulation of commercial space launch and reentry. The FAA regulates and licenses the launch of launch vehicles, the reentry of reentry vehicles, and the operation of launch and reentry sites. In addition to providing the legal services detailed above, attorneys within the branch draft and review evaluations of applications for commercial space licenses, license orders and waiver requests.

Within the FAA, attorneys within the branch work closely with the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation, the Aircraft Certification Service, the Flight Standards Service, Aviation Policy and Plans, and the Office of Rulemaking.

Practice areas: Aircraft certification; commercial space; aircraft maintenance; ultralights, parachutes and sports pilot; advanced aircraft certification and operations.

Operations Law Branch

This branch serves as legal advisor to agency personnel on matters involving safety rules governing certification and operations of air carriers and commercial operators and all operating rules governing general aviation operations.

Within the FAA, attorneys within the branch work closely with the Flight Standards Service, Aviation Policy and Plans, and the Office of Rulemaking.

Practice areas: Parts 91, 121, and 135; operational business relationships; crew training; flight simulators; non-air traffic, non-air space security; transport of hazardous materials.

Air Traffic and Airman and Airport Certification Law Branch

This branch provides counsel regarding legal issues surrounding the certification of airports, pilots, mechanics, repairmen, and other individuals. The branch supports the development and implementation of user fees and provides regulatory drafting support to the Airports and Environmental Law Division. The branch is also responsible for the legal adequacy of FAA regulations, policies and issues concerning airspace, air traffic, obstruction and airport airspace evaluation, navigation facilities, and the agency communications system.

Within the FAA, attorneys within the branch work closely with the Air Traffic Organization, the Flight Standards Service, Aviation Policy and Plans, and the Office of Rulemaking.

Practice areas: national airspace (security, NOTAMs, TFRs, air space actions); overflight fees; slots/congestion management; hazards to navigation; airports; air tour management; airmen and mechanics certification; airmen and mechanics training facilities; aircraft marking and registration.